



## **Stratford St Mary Primary School**

# **Volunteers Policy**

**Policy Drawn up by:**

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**Appendices:**

Volunteer information sheet  
Volunteer agreement  
Offsite Volunteer agreement

**Related Documents**

Safer Recruitment Policy/Managing  
Allegations of Abuse Policy

**Date to be reviewed:**

Annually

# Volunteer Policy

## Introduction

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children at our school. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community.

Our Volunteers may include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Students on work experience
- University students referred to us by Student Volunteer Services
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Friends of the school

The types of activities that Volunteers are engaged include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Undertaking art & craft activities with children
- Working with children on the computers
- Accompanying school visits

## Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event such as a school visit or on a more regular basis, e.g. hearing children read, usually approaches the Headteacher directly.

Before starting to help in school, volunteers should complete the *Volunteer code of conduct* which sets out the school's expectations of volunteers and asks Volunteers to confirm they have received a copy of this policy.

All adults who work in our school, whether a paid member of staff or a volunteer are expected to work and behave in such a way as to actively promote our school ethos which are underpinned by the schools aims and values.

## Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that Volunteers have about the children they work with / come into contact with should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parents of the child / persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Headteacher.

Status: Approved

Approved Date: September 2024

Approved by: HT

Review Date: September 2025

## **Supervision**

All volunteers work under the supervision of the Class Teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Teacher as to how an activity is carried out / what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice / guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query / problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

## **Health & Safety**

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available on request to Volunteers working in the school. Class Teachers ensure that Volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using DT equipment / accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the Class Teacher / Headteacher.

## **Safeguarding**

The welfare of our children is paramount. To ensure the safety of our children, we adopt the following procedures:

- All Volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a *Volunteer Agreement* (Appendix 1)
- To ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, all regular volunteers must have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if they are visiting the school on a regular basis (three times within thirty days). A certificate is issued to the individual to produce in school.
- Where a Volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity e.g. helping supervise a group of children as part of a class visit, no formal checks are carried out on these volunteers. These volunteers, who are under constant supervision of school staff.

If a disclosure is made by a child to a volunteer in school, then the volunteer should immediately report this to the teacher or Senior Designated Professional (Mrs Bilner) or her Alternates (Miss Jones/Mrs Marshall). Appropriate action will then be taken. No investigation or questioning of the child should take place. Anything that is seen or heard that is of concern to the volunteer should be reported immediately to the teacher or DSL. Confidentiality must be maintained. The volunteer may be asked to record what was seen/heard on appropriate safeguarding documentation in school.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Any complaints made about a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a Volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for a Volunteer, e.g. helping with another activity or in another Class;
- Inform the Volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them. The full Complaints Procedure is set out on the school website or from the school office.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually and updated in the light of new guidance from either the DfE or LA.

# Stratford St Mary Primary School

## Volunteers Code of Conduct



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# Volunteers' Code of Conduct

Thank you for volunteering to assist at our school. We value the contribution you can make to our pupils' learning.

This Code of Conduct sets out the guidelines that we expect all our volunteers to follow. Please read through them carefully before signing at the end to say you understand and agree to abide by the Code, then return the signed copy to the school office for our records. We will take a photocopy to give back to you. Volunteers who feel they cannot fully abide by the guidelines within this Code should withdraw their offer of help.

## 1. Supervision

- 1.1 You should be supervised by a member of staff at all times when working with pupils unless you have obtained a valid enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. Never work alone in a room with one pupil.
- 1.2 You should follow the guidance and instructions given by members of staff about your role in the activity that you are helping with.
- 1.3 Parents of pupils will normally be asked to volunteer in a class other than that attended by their child. *[Optional, e.g. for small primaries:]* If, however, a parent assists in their child's class and a conflict of interest arises, e.g. giving undue attention and support to your own child, or using the time to discuss your child's progress with the class teacher, then the class teacher and/or the headteacher may ask the parent to reconsider their offer of help.

## 2. Professional Relationships

- 2.1 At all times you should maintain a 'professional' relationship with all pupils and staff. This will minimise the risk of any allegations of inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.2 Permission should be sought from a pupil before physical contact is made. Even if you know some of the pupils very well you should limit physical contact with pupils, ensuring physical contact is only ever in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender and ethnicity.
- 2.3 Do not share inappropriate personal information about your views, beliefs, sexual relationships or lifestyle.
- 2.4 Never give or exchange contact details with pupils, including email or home addresses, phone numbers or social networking identities. Avoid any communication with a child or young person that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative. Volunteers are in a position of trust with children and young people under 18 at the school and are reminded

that it is an offence to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child or young person.

- 2.5 Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. An adult who becomes aware that a pupil is developing an infatuation should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior manager so appropriate action can be taken to deal with the situation sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned.
- 2.6 Volunteers should use the staff toilet, never the pupils' toilets. On educational visits and outings when public toilets or changing areas may need to be used, you should exercise caution and avoid placing yourself in a position where your actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Male volunteers should use a cubicle in public toilets.
- 2.7 If a pupil tells you something or you see something that concerns you this should be reported to the class teacher immediately. If you feel what has been disclosed and/or witnessed is of a safeguarding nature which may be putting a pupil's welfare at risk, then this should be reported to:
  - a. Mrs Bilner (Designated Safeguarding Lead), or in their absence
  - b. Miss Jones (Alternate Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- 2.8 Remember that you must not try to investigate the matter any further yourself, for example by asking the pupil questions, and that you should never promise to keep any disclosure by a pupil a secret.
- 2.9 Behaviour management of the children is the responsibility of members of school staff (headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and MDSA's) and should not involve volunteer helpers. If you are working with pupils who are misbehaving, please refer this to the class teacher as soon as possible. Never try to reprimand or allocate punishments yourself.
- 2.10 You should act appropriately towards all pupils, parents, carers, staff and other volunteers, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. If you witness or experience bullying, harassment or discrimination, no matter who is the victim or perpetrator, you should raise this with Mrs Bilner (The Headteacher/Designated Senior Manager).
- 2.11 If you have any concerns about following this guidance or are aware of any incidents that occur that may be misconstrued or give rise to concern, please talk to Mrs Bilner (The Designated Safeguarding Lead).

### **3. Setting an example**

All volunteer helpers at our school should be positive role models to the children, so we expect you to:

- 3.1 Dress appropriately for the school setting and the tasks and role you will undertake.
- 3.2 Talk politely and calmly to all pupils. Avoid sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments.
- 3.3 Never use inappropriate, offensive or abusive language whilst on the school premises, even in the staffroom.
- 3.4 Never smoke in the school building or grounds as it is strictly prohibited to do so.
- 3.5 Offer encouragement and praise to the children, both verbally and in written comments, e.g. a comment in their reading record. Never show favouritism to a particular child or group of children nor give rewards which are outside of the school's agreed policy.
- 3.6 Promote and follow the classroom rules.
- 3.7 Never discuss subjects that are inappropriate for the age of the pupils to participate in, or listen to, including references of a sexual nature or 'gossip'/ sharing of information about staff, parents or pupils.
- 3.8 Never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when assisting as a volunteer.

### **4 Use of mobile phones, cameras and computers**

- 4.1. Use of personal IT devices and mobile phones is prohibited, except under exceptional circumstances where the prior agreement of the headteacher has been obtained. If you need to use your mobile phone in an emergency whilst on the school premises, please go to the school office. Using the video or camera features of your mobile phone whilst on the school premises is strictly prohibited.
- 4.2 The school's ICT equipment and mobile phones may only be used in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use of ICT and Mobile Phones Policy and should normally be used for school purposes only.
- 4.3 The school's photographic and video equipment may only be used by volunteers with the prior approval of the headteacher.



## **5 Gifts and rewards**

5.1 Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. Neither should you give pupils any rewards not covered by school policy. Nor should you accept gifts from pupils (other than small tokens at Christmas or as a 'thank you') without first seeking permission in writing from the headteacher.

## **6. Transporting pupils**

6.1 If you are asked and agree to transport children to an event or other location in your own vehicle you should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. All passengers must wear seat belts and car seats must be used for children in accordance with current legislation (including the requirement that children must normally use a child car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm tall, whichever comes first).

6.2 It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the headteacher and has been agreed with the parents/carers.

## **7 Safety procedures**

7.1 Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the fire safety procedures and evacuation routes that are clearly displayed in each classroom. In the event of the alarm sounding, all volunteers should leave via the nearest available fire exit and should not try to recover personal belongings or search for pupils. Our main fire assembly point is the playground. If you have any questions about the fire safety arrangements, then please speak to the Headteacher.

7.2 Please sign in the visitors' book on your arrival and sign out when you leave. This helps us maintain an accurate list of the people on the school premises in the event of a fire.

7.3 Please obtain a visitor's badge from the school office upon your arrival, regardless of how well known you are to the pupils. Please remember to return the visitor's badge before you leave.

7.4 Exercise reasonable care for the safety and welfare of yourself, pupils, members of staff or others on the school premises at all times.

## 8 Educational Trips and outings

- 8.1 Volunteers who are accompanying pupils on educational trips or outings must be approved by the school and be subject to the normal checks and arrangements as outlined in the school's Educational Visits policy. Volunteers who are working with children on a school trip overnight between the hours of 2am and 6am, who may have face-to-face contact with a child, must have a valid DBS check.
- 8.2 Volunteers should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting may be less formal than the school environment. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

## 9 Medical issues

- 9.1 The class teacher you are supporting should inform you of any pupils who have severe medical needs, so that you are aware of any symptoms to look out for. All medical information about pupils is strictly confidential and therefore only very limited information will be provided.
- 9.2 If a pupil requires medical attention inform a member of staff immediately. They will get a qualified first aider to attend to the pupil. Volunteers should not administer first aid except in an emergency.

## 10 If you are unable to attend

- 10.1 If you are due to help in the school, but are unable to do so because of illness or personal circumstances, please inform the school by ringing 01206 323236. Please use the answer phone messaging system if no one is available to take your call. This will help our teachers adjust their lesson plans if they know your support is unavailable.

## 11 Confidentiality

- 11.1 All information you may hear or see about a pupil is of a **confidential** nature. You should not discuss any pupil outside of school that you have been working with directly or indirectly. This includes speaking to other parents about their child or other pupils, speaking to family and friends and posting messages online about your experiences in our school, e.g. on Facebook or via email. If other parents approach you for information, always explain that you are not allowed to discuss school matters with them and ask them to speak with the class teacher or headteacher if they require further information.

## Breaches to this Code

If the headteacher [or other designated person] believes that any of the above guidance and expectations has been breached, then it is at their discretion to decide either to give a warning to the volunteer concerned or to instruct the individual to cease attending the school as a volunteer.

We want all the people who work within our school to maintain the high standards of personal conduct outlined in these guidelines whilst they are on our school site. If the Headteacher is concerned that events in your private life may affect the reputation of the school and/or impact on the effectiveness and safety of those who work and attend our school, they will instruct you to cease your support as a volunteer.

### **Policies**

Upon agreeing and signing this 'Code of Conduct', you will receive the safeguarding and fire safety leaflet .If you do not receive these policies, please ask the Office staff for them.

### **Safeguarding training**

Those volunteers that require a DBS check and meet the 'frequency and intensity' test will need to attend the Introduction to Safeguarding training as a statutory requirement every three years when a course becomes available.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understood the contents of the Volunteers Policy and the 'Volunteers Code of Conduct'. I agree to abide by the procedures and expectations for volunteers that are set out in this code.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_